

Officer Non Key Executive Decision

Relevant Chief Officer (Decision Maker):	Alan Cavill, Director of Communications and Regeneration
Relevant Cabinet Member (for consultation purposes):	Councillor Mark Smith, Cabinet Member for Business, Enterprise and Job Creation
Report Author (Officer name and title):	Rob Green – Head of Enterprise Zones: Enterprise Zone and Blackpool Airport – Growth and Prosperity Team, Communications and Regeneration Directorate Mark Harrison – Project Manager: Enterprise Zone and Blackpool Airport – Growth and Prosperity Team, Communications and Regeneration Directorate
Implementation Date of Decision:	4 April 2023

DEMOLITION OF FORMER FIRE STATION AND ENGINEERING WORKSHOP AT BLACKPOOL AIRPORT

1.0 Purpose of the report:

1.1 To seek agreement and instruction to authorise the demolition of the former fire station and engineering workshop at Blackpool Airport.

2.0 Recommendation(s):

2.1 The recommendations is for the Chief Officer to;

- Note the contents of the report.
- Confirm approval of the methodology.
- Confirm under delegated authority approval to award a contract to the Bradley Group in accordance with recommendations in section 3 below.
- Authorise the Head of Legal services to prepare the contractual documentation

3.0 Reasons for recommendation(s):

- 3.1 Blackpool Council is the accountable body for the Blackpool Enterprise Zone, a 25 year project which has an overarching objective to diversify the economy of the Fylde coast, support generation of 5000 new jobs and attract a minimum of £300m of private sector investment. The Enterprise Zone has the potential to achieve a cumulative £2bn Gross Value Added over its lifetime.

In order to deliver on these targets and as per the overarching masterplan (provided as Appendix A) the Enterprise Zone has identified two key land areas which provide the opportunity for development of new, modern, high specification commercial, employment accommodation. These are the 'Eastern Gateway' and the 'Knowledge Quarter'.

The Knowledge Quarter has been identified, due to the proximity of the Trans-Atlantic Aquacomms fibre cable, as an area which can be developed with a specific focus on the Data, Digital, Technology and the Energy/Sustainability sectors. This vision for the Knowledge Quarter, aligns with those held by Blackpool's Strategy and Climate Team and ICT department with regards to positioning Blackpool and the Fylde Coast as a primary location for ethically and sustainably powered data compute, which in turn will create a hi-tech future and high value jobs in digital, energy, sustainability, advanced-manufacturing and R+D sectors.

In order to kick-start this vision it is proposed that a 'Technology Demonstrator' facility is developed which would provide accommodation for a data centre and R+D facilities along with academic space and collaborative working office accommodation. Initial concept drawings provision for a facility of c16,000 sqft split over three floors and interest for all four of these working spaces is very positive, with ongoing discussions amongst the various parties. The proposed data centre would be the catalyst for a localised heat network, initially providing the waste energy to the adjacent buildings but with a wider aim to be part of more complex system providing waste heat energy to across the town.

The site which can be made immediately available to realise this development is that of the current VSP (vehicle security point)/Airport administration office and the former fire station and engineering workshop (see plan attached). The council do not currently have control of any development land within the Enterprise Zone that is immediately available. The final concept for the technology demonstrator facility will be subject of a separate recommendation to Executive, once reports from the Connected Places Catapult and Innovation Catalyst have been made available.

The VSP/admin office are contained within modular buildings and still operational, the relocation of these (if required) will be subject to separate paper. However, the former fire station and engineering workshop, having sat vacant for c8 months following the departure of a tenant utilising the workshop section of the accommodation for temporary storage, is in a poor state of repair and now considered to be in an unsafe condition.

It is therefore proposed that this property is demolished in order to provide a ground-level development plot suitable for the future delivery of the 'Technology Demonstrator'

3.2a Is the recommendation contrary to a plan or strategy adopted or approved by the Council? No

3.2b Is the recommendation in accordance with the Council's approved budget? Yes

3.3 Other alternative options to be considered:

The alternative options to the above would be to:

A – Do nothing. The site could remain as is for the foreseeable future. This is not considered a viable option due to the reasons stated above, primarily the delivery aims and goals of the Enterprise Zone. The former fire station and engineering working is in a poor state of repair and therefore has a limited life expectancy, as such ongoing maintenance and management costs will increase putting further pressure on the budgets set by the airport.

B – Seek an alternative development plot within the Enterprise Zone. Whilst the physical development of a proposed new technology demonstrator facility is feasible within the Enterprise Zone the distance from the Trans-Atlantic Aquacomms fibre cable housing facility provides significant delivery and financial constraints. Given the ambitions of the Knowledge Quarter and proposals around heat networks, it is essential that data and digital facilities are developed in a cluster to maximise the economic position and energy output and usage from the units.

The Council does not currently own any immediately developable plots of land, and therefore would need to acquire a development plot from a third party. This is not considered an economically viable option

4.0 Council Priority:

4.1 The relevant Council Priority is

- “The economy: Maximising growth and opportunity across Blackpool”

5.0 Background Information

5.1 The demolition of the former fire station and engineering workshop has been through a tender exercise. Four companies were invited to tender, three accepting that invite, and 2 returning offers on time. Following appraisal, a preferred contractor has been selected as the primary contractor to undertake the demolition.

5.2 Does the information submitted include any exempt information? No

5.3 List of Appendices:

Appendix A Preferred contractor tender submission (Commercially sensitive)

Appendix B – site plan

6.0 Legal considerations:

6.1 A contract will need to be entered into.

7.0 Human Resources considerations:

7.1 N/A

8.0 Equalities considerations:

8.1 N/A

9.0 Financial considerations:

9.1 The cost, allowing for contingencies, for this project is expected to be £85,000 plus VAT. The approved Enterprise Zone delivery plan includes substantial provision for demolition and clearance of sites and the principle of development of the site and future transfer of land from Blackpool Airport Properties Limited has been agreed.

10.0 Risk management considerations:

10.1 The risks identified with this project are situated within the demolition project. These will be managed with the contractor via a risk matrix.

11.0 Ethical considerations:

11.1 N/A

12.0 Internal/ External Consultation undertaken:

12.1 Consultation with Airport Board has been undertaken with regards to the above proposal and wider aims and objective for the Blackpool Airport Enterprise Zone.

13.0 Decision of Chief Officer

- 13.1
1. To note the contents of the report.
 2. To confirm approval of the methodology.
 3. To approve the award a contract to the Bradley Group in accordance with recommendations in section 3.
 4. To authorise the Head of Legal services to prepare the contractual documentation.

14.0 Reasons for the Decision of the Chief Officer

14.1 Blackpool Council is the accountable body for the Blackpool Enterprise Zone, a 25 year project which has an overarching objective to diversify the economy of the Fylde coast, support generation of 5000 new jobs and attract a minimum of £300m of private sector investment. The Enterprise Zone has the potential to achieve a cumulative £2bn Gross Value Added over its lifetime.

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